

Statement on Signing the International Dolphin Conservation Program Act *August 15, 1997*

I am pleased today to sign into law H.R. 408, the “International Dolphin Conservation Program Act”. This Act is the product of a bipartisan effort by the Congress, my Administration, and a number of major environmental groups and U.S. fishermen. The Act will ensure that one of the best international programs to conserve marine resources will be strengthened and continued.

The protection of dolphins in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, where these marine mammals swim together with schools of yellowfin tuna, has long been a high priority for the United States. Strengthening the International Dolphin Conservation Program through this legislation is a major victory for strong international efforts to protect dolphins caught during tuna fishing in this region.

The Act recognizes that ongoing international efforts have been a tremendous success—dolphin mortalities have been reduced by more than 98 percent from previous levels. Foreign nations, whose fishing fleets have contributed to this success, will no longer face U.S. embargoes on their tuna products if they continue to participate effectively in this international program.

One of the major provisions of this Act is the change in the definition of the standard for the “dolphin-safe” label affixed to canned tuna sold in the United States. The definition of dolphin-safe will be changed to mean that no dolphins were killed or seriously injured during harvesting of the tuna. The label change will take effect in March 1999 unless the Sec-

retary of Commerce determines that tuna fishing by encircling dolphins has a significant adverse impact on dolphin stocks. United States policy on this question has been and will continue to be based on the best available scientific information.

Unfortunately, H.R. 408 also contains provisions that could be construed to direct how the Nation’s foreign affairs should be conducted. The Constitution vests the President with special authority to conduct the Nation’s foreign affairs, and this authority necessarily entails the exercise of discretion. Thus, section 4(e), that portion of section 6(c) that amends section 302 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and section 7(c) will be construed to be advisory within the executive branch.

In approving H.R. 408, I would like to recognize Congressmen Gilchrest, Cunningham, Saxton, Cardin, and Green and Senators Breaux, Stevens, McCain, Kerry, Snowe, and Hollings for their efforts in the passage of this legislation.

The strictly enforced dolphin protection regime that this Act endorses is a model of effective international cooperation on an important environmental matter, and I am pleased to sign it.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
August 15, 1997.

NOTE: H.R. 408, approved August 15, was assigned Public Law No. 105–42.

The President’s Radio Address *August 16, 1997*

Good morning. As families across America start to prepare for the new school year, I’d like to talk about how students and parents can make the most of the historic higher education opportunities in our new balanced budget.

The balanced budget I signed into law last week meets the Nation’s obligation to offer op-

portunity to every American who’s willing to work for it. It opens the doors to college to a new generation, with the largest investment in higher education since the GI bill 50 years ago. We have achieved a truly remarkable goal: For the first time ever, all children in America who study hard will have the opportunity to